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NOTES FROM THE MEDICAL PRESS

IN CHARGE OF
ELISABETH ROBINSON SCOVIL

CONSERVATION OF VISION.—In the address of the chairman of the section of ophthalmology, at the meeting of the American Medical Association, he stated that many of the cases of defective vision in men being examined for the Army, had been aggravated by the fact that they had been imposed upon by opticians who fitted them with glasses without medical advice. It should be unlawful for any one, not a trained ophthalmologist, to undertake the correction of myopia in a child or young adult. He had advised prescribing opticians not to prescribe lenses that did not give the patient normal vision in each eye, and not to attempt to fit children.

THE NEED OF CALCIUM.—In an editorial on this subject, the *Journal of the American Medical Association* says the average daily requirement of calcium is a little less than 0.5 gm. per man. One pint of milk will furnish this quantity. Aside from this, the menu of American homes offers few opportunities to satisfy this need. It is proposed that an equal mixture of common salt and calcium carbonate should be used in the kitchen and on the table.

SHOCK.—In a report of experiments presented to the French Academy of Science, it was stated that gray rats and frogs, which are carnivorous, were more susceptible to shock than the herbivorous guinea pig. It was suggested that the strong meat diet of the soldiers was one of the causes of the frequent severe symptoms of shock during the war.

PUERPERAL SEPSIS.—A writer in the *Lancet* advocates the theory that nature sterilizes the vagina and washes out intruding organisms. This process is interfered with if vaginal examinations are made during labor. Instead of protection it may be a menace to life. Another writer argues that if manual examination is considered necessary it should be conducted through the rectum where there is no danger of infection, and also by outside pressure, manipulation and palpation. The most thorough preparation of the hands does not entirely prevent danger.

DERMATOGRAPHIC PENCIL.—*The Journal of the American Medical Association* reports that if the skin is wiped off with a little gasoline just before being marked with the paper pencil no pressure is required and the pencil makes a very distinct mark.

THE WOUNDED IN THE WAR.—A French journal says that the French finally succeeded in transforming the whole treatment of

wounds and obtaining undreamed of results. Excision, immediately followed by primary or secondary suture, cured the wounded so fast and so completely that it was said the war was carried on with the wounded.

ELIMINATION OF ANTS.—A Pittsburgh physician recommends liberal coats of whitewash to exterminate ants. The walls, steps and sills of the cellar infested by them were profusely whitewashed and any place where they appeared was treated in the same way. This treatment was effectual in getting rid of them.

VACCINE AGAINST CANCER.—The *Journal of the American Medical Association* says Professor Rappin of the University of Nantes is director of the Pasteur Institute; as early as 1886 he called attention to a micro-organism which he found constantly in cancer and has continued to find since, though his researches have been fragmentary. He has been recently experimenting with a vaccine made from this micro-organism and reports three patients with inoperable cancer treated with it. He considers the results encouraging although his material was so small and not demonstrable. He gives illustrations of the micro-organism as seen in an alveolar cancer, hoping others will carry on the research more thoroughly.

FEVER AND THE WATER RESERVE.—The same Journal, in an editorial comment on a series of studies on this subject, says it was observed in the experiments that when glucose was given intravenously until marked glycosuria and diuresis developed, and water was withheld until the body lost some weight, fever came on and chills were noted. It is therefore suggested that fever may result from the lack, in the body, of water available for evaporation and in infectious diseases such lack may be caused by an abnormal increase in the power of the protein of the body to absorb and bind water. It is possible that this theory may lead to important advances in the treatment of febrile diseases.